

SKELTON & BROTTON  
URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

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. REPORT .  
for the Year 1947

of the Medical Officer of Health

W. H. BUTCHER, V.R.D., M.A.,

D.M., D.P.H., BARRISTER-AT-LAW.

SURGEON COMMANDER R.N.V.R.(RET)

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TO THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS  
OF THE  
SKELTON & BROTTON URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

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MADAM AND GENTLEMEN,

I beg to submit herewith my Report for the year ended 31st December, 1947. As you are aware I commenced duties on the 1st July, 1947, so that a great part of what follows refers to work done and facts collected by my predecessor Dr. Gibson, but for any shortcomings in the Report the responsibility is mine.

**SECTION I: Vital Statistics and Social Conditions.**

Area in Acres : 15,309.

Estimate of resident population mid 1947 : 12,530.

Number of inhabited houses according to rate books : 3,694.

Rateable Value : £47,129.

Sum represented by a penny rate : £182.

The district consists of an industrial belt surrounded by agricultural and moor lands. The principal industry is ironstone mining, while factories for the light industries are being built.

The number of births registered as occurring in the district during the year is 272 corresponding to a birthrate of 21.6 per thousand of the population. The deaths of residents was 152 giving a death rate of 12.1. Eighteen infants under the age of one year died giving an infant mortality rate of 66 per thousand births compared to the rate for England and Wales of some 41. Of these 7 were infants who died in the first 14 days of life (neo-natal deaths). Since the factors causing still births are of the same order as those causing neo-natal deaths the number of still births, 8, should be added to the 7 neo-natal deaths to get an approximate picture of the loss of lives, or potential lives, before the age of 14 days. Recently a good deal of research has been undertaken into the causes of these deaths ; many of the factors remain obscure or unknown. Approximately 47% of the neo-natal deaths are due to disturbances prior to birth causing prematurity ; 24% are due to disturbances during birth, i.e. birth injuries and 14% to bodily malformations, while infections after birth and other conditions are responsible for the rest. Since prematurity is frequently a contributory factor in deaths at birth due to injury, or after birth due to infections, no material improvement in neo-natal mortality can occur without a reduction in premature births. The causation of prematurity is largely obscure for in some two/fifths to one/half of the cases the cause is unknown ; in the remainder, toxæmia, multiple pregnancies and maternal bleeding before the infant's birth are the causes, and of these toxæmia is the most important. This is twice as common among the poorer than among the well-to-do and may have some relation to food eaten, not in pregnancy alone, but throughout the life of the individual.

A death-rate of 12.1 reminds us that the population is gradually ageing ; life with a postponement of senescence or at least of senility, has been prolonged. Unless the aged are prepared and moreover allowed to continue their period of employed activity, the younger ages will have to support an increasing number of the inactive.

TABLE I.

## Vital Statistics.

## CAUSES OF DEATH

		MALE	FEMALE
Typhoid & Para-Typhoid	....	—	—
Cerebro-spinal fever	....	—	—
Scarlet Fever	....	—	—
Whooping Cough	....	—	—
Diphtheria	....	—	—
Tuberculosis of Resp. Sys.		2	4
Other Forms of Tb.	....	—	—
Syphilitic Diseases	....	2	—
Influenza	....	1	2
Measles	....	—	—
Ac. Poliomyl. & Enceph.	....	—	—
Ac. inf. Enceph	....	—	—
Cancer of mouth and gullet (M)			
uterus (F)		—	—
Cancer of Stomach & Duodenum		4	3
Cancer of Breast	....	0	3
Cancer of all other sites	....	2	0
Diabetes	....	1	1
Intracranial Vascular lesions		8	8
Heart Diseases	....	33	24
Other diseases of Circ. System		3	1
Bronchitis	....	11	1
Pneumonia	....	1	1
Other Resp. dis.	....	1	2
Ulcer of stomach or duodenum		0	1
Diarrhoea under 2 years	....	2	—
Appendicitis	....	—	—
Other digestive diseases	....	1	—
Nephritis	....	4	5
Puerp. and post. abort. sepsis.		—	—
Other maternal causes	....	—	—
Premature births	....	—	5
Congen. malform., birth injuries and			
infections	....	2	1
Suicide	....	1	—
Road traffic accidents	....	—	—
Other violent causes	....	3	1
All other causes	....	4	3
ALL CAUSES	....	86	66

TABLE II

## Live Births

		MALE	FEMALE
Total	....	148	124
Legitimate	....	141	121
Illegitimate	....	7	3

## Still Births

		MALE	FEMALE
Total	....	4	4
Legitimate	....	4	3
Illegitimate	....	—	1

## Deaths of Infants

		MALE	FEMALE
Total	....	9	9
Legitimate	....	8	9
Illegitimate	....	1	—

## SECTION II: Infectious Diseases:

**Infantile Paralysis:** Two cases of anterior-polio-myelitis were notified. The virus of the disease is found in the nose and throat and also in the excreta of sufferers and contacts. Since during an epidemic many harbour the virus without any definite illness, fewer still suffer from slight fever and malaise and only a small fraction of the population develop actual paralysis, measures for its control with our present knowledge are unlikely to be effective.

**Diphtheria.** No case of diphtheria was notified. The number of children immunised during the year was 79 in the 0-4 age group and 4 in the 5-14 age group. Since the number of children in the former age group is 1,110 and that in the latter 1,810 the number immunised during the year is insignificant and can have little effect upon the prevalence of diphtheria. Since the soil remains suitable the absence of diphtheria is due to other factors such as an absence of the seed. The Ministry of Health aims at an immunised percentage of children amounting to 75. I do not believe that exhortations by means of posters or advertisements or formal lectures are worth the cost and the effort. The useful method is a personal appeal informally given as the occasion arises by the Health Visitor herself or by the doctor.

**Typhoid Fever.** A single case of this was contracted during a holiday in France and was the subject of enquiry by the French Authorities through the Ministry of Health.

**Tuberculosis.** There were five new cases of Pulmonary Tuberculosis notified during the year as compared with thirteen in 1946. I visit each notified case myself to inspect the house and investigate whether the source of infection is discoverable and to stress the importance of contacts being kept under the supervision of the Chest Physician.

While the decline in the disease that has taken place in the last half century cannot be assigned to any particular anti-tuberculosis measure, but has accompanied the general rise in the social well-being of the people, it is a reasonable step that the consumptive be furnished with his or her own bedroom. Unfortunately at present owing to the shortage of beds there is usually considerable delay in admitting cases to Sanatoria. Investigation of the source of infection is a difficult matter because the factors involved in the infection and in the failure of the individual's resistance vary from person to person. For instance, it may be an old infection relit owing to a change or changes in such factors as residence or employment, or it may be a recent infection or re-infection. While generally speaking all of us are exposed to infection and become infected before we reach maturity, only a small minority develop the disease of Pulmonary Tuberculosis. Why this should happen is at present unknown. Meanwhile it is reasonable to see that the opportunity for near or massive infection is reduced by the provision of satisfactory housing and an early diagnosis of the disease.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASES, 1947  
(other than Tuberculosis)

TABLE III.

	All Ages	Under 1 year	1 year	2	3	4	5	6	10—	15—	20—	25—	30—	35—	40—	45—	50—	Cases Admit'd Hospital
Scarlet Fever	55	—	—	1	5	2	26	16	5	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	50	
Diphtheria	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Pneumonia	9	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	1	2	2	1	—	
Erysipelas	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	1	
Puerperal Pyrexia	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	
Typhoid Fever	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	1	
Poliomyelitis	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2
Measles	104	10	12	26	18	18	20	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Whooping Cough	6	1	1	2	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	

### SECTION III : Milk Supplies :

No milk samples were submitted by your Sanitary Inspector for bacteriological examination during the year as compared with 36 samples in 1946. There are some 76 producers of undesignated milk in the district. For milk sampling to give a useful picture of the cleanliness, or otherwise, of a particular producer, at least one sample a month or twelve a year should be taken. The odd sample taken during the course of two or three years is not at all informative since it is liable so much to chance results. Systematic sampling, however, is of a certain value, particularly an educative one for the producer and, therefore, it is recommended that it be undertaken as soon as possible.

I have visited the premises of a certain number of producers ; it appears that on the whole reasonable efforts are being made by these to conform to the Milk & Dairies Order, 1926. It must be recalled, however, that a certain number of producers are without sufficient and convenient supplies of wholesome water, particularly in the summer months. I do not know how anyone with the best will in the world can produce clean milk without ample water. Other shortages besides that of water makes the production of clean milk more difficult or at least give grounds for ready excuses for non-compliance with its details since plenty of soap, clean towels and cloths are essential for clean hands, milking stools and udders and sufficient fuel or power for clean utensils.

### SECTION IV. Water Supplies :

I took a sample of water from the Cleveland Water Company on the 16th December, and sent it for both chemical and bacteriological examination. I give the results in a table below.

TABLE IV.

#### Chemical Results in Parts per Million.

Appearance :	Faint opalescence with a very slight flocculent deposit of iron oxide.		
	Turbidity (Silica Scale)	....	6
Colour (Hazen) ....	Less than 10	Odour ....	.... Nil
Reaction pH. On the acid side			
of neutrality	6.8	Carbon Dioxide ....	.... 7
Electric Conductivity at 20°C.	200	Total Solids, dried at 180°C.	.... 135
Chlorine in Chlorides	18	Alkalinity as Calcium Carbonate	.... 30
Hardness : Total 75	Carbonate (Temporary) 30	Non-carbonate (Permanent)	.... 45
Nitrogen in Nitrates	0.0	Nitrogen in Nitrites	.... less than 0.01
Free Ammonia ....	0.16	Oxygen absorbed in 4 hrs. at 27°C.	.... 0.70
Albuminoid Ammonia	0.052	Residual Chlorine ....	Absent
Metals : Iron	0.15	Manganese 0.21	Other metals absent

#### Bacteriological Results

1 day at 37°C. 2 days at 37°C. 3 days at 20°C.

Number of Colonies developing on Agar per cc. or ml. in	0	0	6
Presumptive Coliform Reaction	Present in .....	Absent from .....	100 ml .....
Bact. coli ....	Present in .....	Absent from .....	100 ml .....
Cl. welchii Reaction	Present in .....	Absent from .....	100 ml .....

While these figures show a water of a high degree of chemical and bacteriological purity, its quantity is not so satisfactory. In the last half of the year, Skelton Green, Boosbeck, and parts of Brotton, were without water for an appreciable number of days. whilst in November, the water in Lockwood Beck Reservoir fell to some ten days supply I am strongly of opinion that the proposed Reservoir at Scaling yielding 1,000,000 gallons per day, should be built forthwith.

The position of isolated dwellings in many instances is very unsatisfactory. The well supplying Avens House Farm was found in August to yield a foul smelling, turbid liquid. Mount Pleasant Farm, Freeborough Farm, Warsett Farm and the licensed premises known as the Jolly Sailors, are without a wholesome or sufficient supply of water. Further enquiries would doubtless find others in a similar plight. Low Farm, Gerrick, was without a sufficient supply during the summer, while bacteriological examination of this supply made in 1946 showed that it was polluted. This is not surprising since before reaching the dwelling the water communicates with a pond liable to pollution by bovines.

#### **SECTION V : Food and Drugs Act, 1938.**

None of the articles sent by the Inspectors of the North Riding County Council to the County Analysts contravened the standards laid down.

The Ice-cream (Heat Treatment etc.) Regulations, 1947, came into operation on the 1st May, 1947, except for reservations regarding equipment. The aim of the Regulations is to reduce the likelihood of this agreeable refreshment being a vehicle in the spread of gastro-intestinal diseases. Apart altogether from ice-cream, cleanliness in all premises where food is handled, or sold, is necessary as is shown by the number of food poisoning outbreaks reported during the summer of 1947 in England and Wales. The Food & Drugs Act, 1938, Section 13, specifies the hygienic requirements required in all premises where food is sold or manufactured for sale. Proper methods of manufacture or handling are even more important than satisfactory premises, i.e., the frequent washing of hands, the scrubbing of nails of food handlers, and the adequate washing of crockery and cutlery.

#### **SECTION VI : Housing :**

Certain built-up areas have pan closets, totalling 2,245 in number, a most unsatisfactory system in such areas, however unobjectionable in isolated dwellings with sufficient land for the disposal of the contents. Conversion schemes are necessary in these areas, a matter on which the Clerk of the Council has been, and is, in communication with the relevant Authorities. Some built-up areas have only stand-pipes. Many houses are in bad repair. Among the defects are leaking roofs, defective gutters, defective pointing, damp walls, defective plastering, defective yard surfaces and general deterioration of the fabric. A systematic house to house inspection is required.

**TABLE V**  
**HOUSING STATISTICS**

New Houses erected in 1947 :

(a) By private enterprise	....	....	....	....	4
(b) By the Council	....	....	....	....	6
					10

1. *Inspection of dwelling-houses during the year :*

(1) (a) Total number of dwelling-houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts)	....	....	88
(b) Number of inspections made for the purpose	....	....	162
(2) (a) Number of dwelling-houses (included under sub-head (1) above) which were inspected and recorded under the Housing Consolidated Regulations 1925	....	....	—
(b) Number of inspections made for the purpose	....	....	—
(3) Number of dwelling-houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation			Nil
(4) Number of dwelling-houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-head) found to be not in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation	....	....	78

2. *Remedy of defects during the year without service of formal notices :*

(1) Number of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the local authority or their officers	....	43
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3. *Action under Statutory Powers during the year :*

A. Proceedings under Sections 9, 10 and 16 of the Housing Act, 1936 :					
(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs	....	....	....	....	13
(2) Number of dwelling-houses rendered fit after service of formal notices :					
(a) By owners	....	....	....	....	12
(b) By local authority in default of owners	....	....	....	....	—

B. Proceedings under Public Health Acts :

(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied	....	....	12
(2) Number of dwelling-houses in which defects were remedied after service of formal notices :			
(a) By owners	....	....	2
(b) By local authority in default of owners	....	....	—

C. Proceedings under Sections 11 and 13 of the Housing Act, 1936 :

(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made	....	....	....	....	Nil
(2) Number of dwelling-houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders	....	....	....	....	Nil

**Table V.—Housing Statistics—continued.**

D. Proceedings under Section 12, Housing Act, 1936 :

(1) Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were made	....	....	Nil
(2) Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the tenement or room having been rendered fit	....	....	Nil

I have omitted that portion of the table dealing with overcrowding under the Housing Act, 1935, since I have no complete information regarding the number of dwellings which are overcrowded.

**SECTION VII : Sanitary Circumstances of the District :**

I give below a Table of the Sanitary work done during the year by your Sanitary Inspector, Mr. R. Barry. Owing to his absence, due to sickness, I have extracted the information from his records myself.

**TABLE VI**

**Nuisance Inspections.**

Total No. of Inspections made for Nuisances only 371 (Not including Housing Inspections)

Nuisances found	....	108	Total needing abatement	146
Nuisances in hand, end of				
previous year	....	38	Abated during year	....
			Outstanding at end of year	74
				—
Notices served, informal	....	108	Complied with	66
Notices served, Statutory	....	6	Complied with	6
Total Number of summonses or other legal proceedings	....			Nil

Regulated Building Trades, etc.	No. in District	No. on Register	Total No. of inspections made	General Conditions	Legal Proceedings (if any)
Common Lodging Houses	None	—	—	—	—
Houses let in lodgings	....	None	—	—	—
Knackers' Yards	....	One	1	12	Satisfactory
Tents, Vans & Sheds	....	Two	1	do.	—
Offensive Trades	....	None	—	—	—
Slaughterhouses	....	One	1	2	Satisfactory

**Section VII.—Table VI.—continued.**

**Milk Supply**

Total number of Cowsheds inspected during the year .... .... 40

**Meat Inspection**

Total inspections .... .... .... .... .... 17

Number of seizures of unsound food .... .... .... .... 30

Total weight .... 840 lbs. of Meat

**Other Foods.**

Total Inspections .... .... .... .... .... 7

Total Weight of unsound Food 2½ lbs. Margarine 3 cwt. Sugar

5 lbs. Pork Sausage Meat

1 tin Pilchards 2 tins Beans

15 oz. tin Grade A Salmon

2 tins Peas 2 tins Pet Milk

**SECTION VIII : Factories Act, 1937 :**

The following figures have been returned to the Director of Statistics, Ministry of Labour and National Service regarding factories in the district.

**TABLE VII.**

**1. Inspections** for purposes of provision as to health (including inspections made by Sanitary Inspector).

PREMISES	No. on Register	No. of Inspections	No. of written Notices	Occupiers Prosec'ted
(I) Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities .... ....	19	46	—	—
(II) Factories not included in (I) in which Section 7 is enforced by Local Authority .... ....	11	26	—	—
(III) Other premises in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority (excluding out-workers' premises)	3 (Building Sites)	8	—	—
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>80</b>	—	—

Section VIII.—Table—VII.—*continued.*

2. Cases in which defects were found.

	Number of cases in which defects were found			
	Found	Remedied	Referred to H.M. Inspector	By H.M. Inspector
Sanitary Conveniences				
(a) insufficient	....	3	2	—
(b) unsuitable or defective	....	2	2	—
TOTAL	....	5	4	2

With the advent of Regional Hospital Boards, Medical Officers of Health as such have no concern with isolation hospitals nor are they in official contact with the patients once they have entered the portals of these hospitals. I am of the opinion that the Medical Officer of Health should have official access to the patients in these hospitals so that he can keep under observation any cases of doubtful diagnosis or epidemiological interest. After all, he has some claim to be regarded as the area specialist in these diseases.

In conclusion I wish to express my appreciation of the support, during the year, of my Chairman and Members of the Health Committee, and the cordial co-operation of the Clerk of the Council, Mr. F. Wilkinson.

I am, Madam and Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

BROTTON,

10th June, 1948.

W. H. BUTCHER,

Medical Officer of Health.